



**Twickenham Yacht Club – support boat guidance notes (Revised January 2016)**

You must be familiar with the operation of the boat you are going to use – if you are not, please ask in good time so that you can be shown. Bosun intends to produce a separate guide on how to operate the boats which expands on some of the information below.

Your priority is the safety of dinghy sailors afloat. Your secondary task is to lay and recover the racing marks to suit the wishes of the race officer. To do these jobs effectively, first you need **to be prepared**.

- Get there in good time – preparation will take longer than you think.
- Bring your mobile phone in a waterproof bag, or keep it in the emergency container.
- Come properly dressed. One member of the crew must be prepared to get in the water. That means wearing a buoyancy aid, not a lifejacket (inflated, you can't do anything) and, depending on the time of year – a wetsuit or better still a drysuit – essential between November and April.
- Check your boat has sufficient fuel. Fuel should already be on board the Pioner and the RIB but the Dory fuel can is kept in the fuel store. All club support boats use petrol only.
- Collect the other bits from the Bosun's cupboard in the clubhouse – Boat Keys, Kill cord, Radios.
- Collect the appropriate white or orange emergency container which contains first aid kit, throw line, basic tools, knife, spare kill cord etc.
- Unlock the boat – you will need your club key as well as the boat padlock key.
- Make sure you have tow line, paddle and anchor aboard.
- Bail out the rainwater – Pioner & RIB have internal electric pumps – Dory needs a bucket, or the portable electric pump if it is very wet.

**Starting up & moving off**

- Battery switched on.
- Fuel tank breather valve open.
- Engine lowered to fully down position.
- Steering free to move
- Squeeze bulb on fuel line until it is firm.
- CONNECT KILL CORD around your left knee. Engine on = kill cord on at all times
- Turn the key and it should start. (Dory engine is hand started and has a manual choke).
- Check that water is coming from the telltale on the engine – if not STOP immediately and investigate the cooling system.
- Pull the kill cord out – the engine should stop. Replace kill cord.
- Load the racing marks as requested by the Race Officer.
- Carry out a Radio Check with the Race Officer.

It is the race officer's responsibility, with input from the support boat operator to decide if conditions are suitable for racing to take place. Ideally, two persons should be aboard the support boat.

## **Laying Marks**

- Prepare the mark with the chain flaked on the deck and the anchor on top.
- Get close to the position specified by the Race Officer. If you consider that position to be unsuitable, advise the race officer and act accordingly.
- Head into the stream and use the stream to stop the boat in the required position.
- Drop the anchor or weight over the side followed by the mark. Avoid fibreglass damage.
- Move away and after a few minutes check that the mark is in the required position and not moving.
- If you are single handed and need to move away from the console to drop or recover marks, you must turn the engine off. Never leave the engine running unless you have the kill cord attached around your leg.

## **Providing Safety Cover**

- The trick is to be close enough to help if needed but far enough away not to be a nuisance.
- You need to be able to see the whole course – keep looking behind you.
- Your priority is people, ahead of boats – so if you see an incident, you must get there fast, count heads and if all is well stand off and let them recover unless they ask for help.
- Chances are that if there is one incident, there will soon be others, so keep an eye out for them.
- Look out for signs of cold and fatigue and if necessary evacuate crew – especially between November & May.

## **Recovering capsized boats**

- Best way is to approach the bow – get your crew to grab the forestay and work the way up it until you can lift the mast. Do it slowly and the boat will feather into the wind.
- Make sure your prop is not anywhere near people in the water – if it is Stop the engine
- Hold the forestay until the crew is in control or you decide to establish a tow.
- Non self draining dinghies like the Enterprise need to be towed SLOWLY to avoid damage to the nearest slipway to be emptied out.
- Mast stuck in the mud? (Unlikely since the river bed is mainly hard gravel and the mud layer is only a couple of inches thick in most places) The solution is to tow it out the way it went in – Attach tow line to the upper shroud where it meets the hull and pull in line with the mast.
- If casualty is on or near the shore, you may have to tow clear of the bank before righting to avoid overhanging trees.

## **Dealing with inversions**

A complete or partial inversion is potentially the most dangerous situation because it is possible that a crew member could be trapped under water. Rapid response is necessary. If you suspect an entrapment, the recommended course of action is to right the boat. There are various methods to try

- Take towline from bow – and tow the boat in a circle. This should recover it to the half capsize position, from which lifting from the masthead should do the trick. If the mast is stuck in the mud – recover as above.
- With a smaller boat like a Topper or Oppie, the first thing to try is lifting the bow of the dinghy on to the safety boat – this usually generates enough air space to free any entrapment.

## **Towing boats**

- Training boats – Quests, Topper and Optimist may be safely towed using their painter.
- Private boats, especially non self draining designs like the Enterprise, should be towed using a tow line – two turns round the mast, with the crew holding the end.
- Crew and helm should sit at the back or the boat will submarine as soon as you put on any speed. Centreboard should be raised. You will need to remind crew.
- Mainsail should be dropped and jib furled or allowed to flap freely.

## **Recovering a “Man Overboard”**

- Ignore the stream – you are both travelling with it.
- Approach slowly into the wind – using wind to stop you without needing to use reverse.
- As soon as you have established contact TURN THE ENGINE OFF.
- With Pioner, lower the ramp (have a practice before you need to do this in anger)
- With Dory or RIB, if casualty is able to help themselves make a loop on the end of a piece of rope, pass loop over one foot of casualty, secure your end so that casualty can use loop as a step.
- Or lat the casualty alongside, horizontal in the water and bring one arm and one leg aboard. You can then roll casualty into the boat.
- Or, if you have two people on board, turn casualty facing AWAY from boat, one rescuer puts hand under each armpit. Casualty can then usually be lifted up to sit on the side.

## **First aid afloat**

Boat first aid kit is kept in the white or orange emergency container. Minor scrapes bumps and bruises can be treated on the scene. More comprehensive kits are kept in the race hut and in the clubhouse. Warn anyone who has a minor cut about the risk of Weills disease. Apply proper waterproof dressing as soon as possible. Open wound contact with river water is low risk, but contact with shore, jetty, ladder etc is high risk.

## **First aid priorities – Dr ABC**

- D – Danger – do not increase the number of casualties by putting yourself at risk
- r – response – is the casualty, conscious, breathing and with a pulse – if not, CALL FOR HELP
- A – Airways – make sure this is clear – consider recovery position.
- B – Breathing – keep checking – if not start Rescue Breaths.
- C – Circulation – Chest compressions.

## **Suspected broken limbs / spinal injuries**

Great care is needed to avoid making things worse, so if you suspect a spinal injury or a broken limb, DO NOT ATTEMPT TO REMOVE CASUALTY FROM THE WATER. Better risk mild hypothermia than serious long term damage. The procedure is:-

- One of the safety boat crews must get in the water to support and reassure the casualty.
- Dial 999 and ask for London Coastguard and explain the situation. They will call out RNLI from Teddington Lock who have the training and kit to deal with it.
- If you have a proper VHF radio aboard, contact London VTS on channel 14.

## Casualty evacuation point

If you have a casualty on board who will require an ambulance, or is “walking wounded” the nominated evacuation point is the White Swan Hard. That avoids the need to climb ladders or walk up steep ramps. It is easy for the ambulance to locate.

## At the end of the day

- Return boat to pontoon as secure with chains, padlock etc. Return kit to where you found it
- Wash any mud out of the boat
- Check fuel level – if less than 50%, report to Bosun
- Report any problems to Bosun.

## Useful video links

- **Swanage Sailing Club – safety boat training video**
  - – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OuMJ2ExA79k>
- **Good reason to wear a killcord**
  - – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jl0xKmNUZIE>
- **Drowning**
  - – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RA5itaSHQKU>
- **Choking**
  - – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PA9hpOnvtCk>
- **Cold water shock**
  - – [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X6\\_FF\\_BVOxM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X6_FF_BVOxM)
- **Lifejackets**
  - – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NNfXMLG5pI4>
- **AED**
  - – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tgCOWxAnNQk>